

Animals in Disasters

MODULE B UNIT 3

Disaster Preparedness Through Planning and Collaboration

Overview

This unit covers the emergency management process with an emphasis on the care of animals and their owners. It suggests methods for creating a successful emergency operations plan and discusses methods to involve various levels of government in the planning process.

Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Develop an emergency operations plan based on the criteria of an effective plan
- Involve Federal, State and local resources in the planning process
- Establish effective communications within your community
- Test your plan

Local preparedness is best

Most disasters occur and are addressed at the local level. Resources and expertise found locally can identify common hazards and prioritize mitigation and planning to reduce the impact of hazards. When a disaster requires outside assistance, it is best when a local community understands its priorities for recovery and recognizes decision-makers in rebuilding its infrastructure and services. For these reasons, having a functional local emergency operations plan in place before a disaster occurs is vitally important.

Why a plan?

A plan of action that is implemented when a disaster occurs forms the basis for emergency preparedness. This plan of action contains information on community hazards and details prompt and effective measures to take when an emergency occurs. You must be prepared to use the resources that are available to you. To ensure your action plan addresses unforeseen issues, exercises are essential.

Emergency management and the law

Federal law

The Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, Public Law 920, 81st Congress as amended, is the legal basis for national civil defense and emergency management in the United States. This act establishes that responsibility for national civil defense and emergency management is shared among local, State and Federal governments.

State law

Each State must have laws that are consistent with the Federal law if they wish to qualify for Federal aid and assistance. The law defines the specific responsibilities of the local and State governments, and gives the State the authority to pass local emergency management laws or ordinances.

Some State laws are permissive and leave decisions to local jurisdictions; others may be very specific and require certain action by local government. Such laws are called *directives* and use terminology that is mandatory.

Local laws

The local law or ordinance gives the local emergency management agency the legal authority to operate. It should clearly define the authority, duties, and specific responsibilities of the personnel and identify who in the daily operations of the local government has the final authority for emergency management operations. This person has the responsibility for the planning decisions that affect future emergencies as well as the final authority in actual emergency situations. Often this is the mayor.

Preparedness plan and the law

On the Federal and State levels laws may be broad to cover a variety of situations within very diverse political environments. Local laws or ordinances can be more specific, defining exact duties, actions, or requirements. Local law should provide for the establishment of an emergency operations or preparedness plan. The plan should describe in detail who has the authority to do what in disasters. The plan itself is not a law but is a detailed description of the actions that are authorized under the law.

Supplemental laws and agreements that can facilitate emergency management planning

A mutual aid agreement is a legal agreement among two or more local jurisdictions that plan to assist each other in cases of emergency. They are signed by the heads of the governments or organizations involved. Mutual aid agreements may include such things as:

- ▶ Access across boundaries,
- ▶ Provision of resources and services,
- ▶ The extent to which the resources and services will be provided,
- ▶ Public safety actions,
- ▶ Who will declare that a state of emergency exists,
- ▶ Who will be in charge of the resources received, and
- ▶ Who will provide compensation and death benefits for those injured or killed while rendering aid.

Even if you feel you have all the resources you need to respond, situations may arise making it necessary to rely on neighboring areas. Examples of plans and mutual aid agreements at various levels are given in the appendices.

Review all your animal-related laws to determine who is responsible for what actions. If there is a duplication or overlap of duties, a written memorandum of understanding between agencies should be developed to designate who has what specific responsibilities in a disaster. Conflicts or disagreements should be resolved in writing. If responsibilities are omitted, they can be included in the memorandum until appropriate legislation is enacted. By doing this in advance, confusion over responsibilities, liabilities and financial commitments can be avoided.

Agencies and services that may be involved with animal issues during Federally declared disasters

During a Federally declared disaster, animal-care providers are most likely to involve representatives from:

- Department of Defense,
- Urban Search and Rescue (US&R),
- U.S. Department of Agriculture,
- Department of Health and Human Services, which includes the Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams, and
- National humane groups that function as non-governmental organizations.

The Emergency Support Functions (ESF) of each of the Federal groups is described in the Federal Response Plan (FRP).

Department of Defense (DOD)	Includes the DOD Veterinary Services. The U.S. Army Veterinary Corps is activated in Federally declared disasters upon request from the affected State's Governor via the President. In the past, the U.S. Army has been the most important Federal agency that deals directly with veterinary issues in disasters because of their excellent communications capabilities and access to extensive resources.
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Veterinarians within HHS function as part of the National Disaster Medical Services. The Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMATs) are composed of veterinarians and other persons who have pre-enrolled with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and Federal government. They help re-establish the veterinary practices of affected veterinarians. These VMATs are activated via State and Federal emergency management officials. Their field activities are coordinated through the coordinator of emergency preparedness at the AVMA headquarters in Schaumburg, Illinois. The AVMA is the designated lead agency to coordinate response activities related to animals in disasters.

<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)</p>	<p>Regulate Federal and State health programs for animals and through Cooperative Extension Services have nationwide, county-based expertise to consult on most phases of emergency management. See list to follow.</p> <p>Resources and expertise that county extension educators can provide in disasters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Disaster prevention, ▲ Pesticide safety and handling, ▲ Fire safety training, ▲ Disaster response, ▲ Counseling on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Small businesses – Consumer economics – Livestock feed safety – Water quality – Livestock husbandry – Family and personal stress – Financial planning – Waste management – Building construction safety ▲ Disaster mitigation, ▲ Disaster preparedness, and ▲ Capabilities to gather, evaluate and disseminate knowledge and expertise through its email network and within universities.
<p>Non-governmental organizations</p>	<p>Provide care for animals in disasters and have traditionally been national humane organizations, such as American Humane Association, Humane Society of the United States, United Animal Nations, American Kennel Club and the Cat Fancier's Association. Currently these groups do not have an official role in Federal response plan. These volunteer agencies are a potential financial and human support resource to the local communities.</p>

State level Individual veterinarians are licensed to practice in a State through the State licensing board. In some States, there are umbrella organizations for humane and animal control shelters and personnel. They cooperate in the care of animals when there are declared disasters.

Local level At the local level, animal control, veterinarians and humane shelters commonly deal with the care of animals. They have daily experience with the capture and rescue of lost or abandoned animals, temporary housing, and fostering and adoption programs. In many communities the animal control department has the legal authority to deal with stray animals. However, in other communities the authority or power for animal care is not clearly defined and animal-care groups vary in their organization and capabilities.

Local veterinarians generally operate private practices. They have a permanent, vested interest in the economic health and emotional well-being of pet owners in the community. By law veterinarians are the only group that can legally diagnose and treat conditions in animals. Veterinary practices are often equipped similarly to human hospitals and usually have:

- ▶ Surgical and X-ray facilities,
- ▶ Examination rooms,
- ▶ Diagnostic equipment, and
- ▶ A supply of commonly used medications.

Emergency operations planning

First steps Like response to a disaster, developing a plan is a team effort. Start by forming a committee. The committee should be co-chaired by emergency management personnel and a representative from the animal-care community. Veterinarians, county extension educators, and directors of humane shelters or animal control are examples of suitable animal-care industry representatives.

Committee members should ideally possess the following credentials:

- ▶ Authority to represent,
- ▶ Control over resources that can be used in an disaster, and
- ▶ Experience or knowledge of disasters.

In cases where community plans for animals and their owners are not well developed, the initiative for plan development may come from emergency management officials or the animal-care community.

Components of the Emergency Operations Plan

An Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) contains information on how citizens, property and animals will be protected in an emergency. It describes actions that may be required for natural or technological hazards. It details the tasks for specified organizations and individuals at projected places and times based on established objectives, assumptions, and a realistic assessment of capabilities.

A local EOP is essential. Regardless of how many resources you have in the community, putting them to use without a plan is of little value. A plan avoids duplication of resources and response and allows you to effectively integrate with the State and Federal response.

FEMA provides guidance to local emergency operations planners for developing EOPs under its Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS). This guide, CPG 1-8, describes the recommended form, content, and development process of an EOP. It sets forth FEMA's policy concerning plans produced with Federal assistance. The *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning* (State and Local (SLG) 101) details plan development, responsibilities and tasking, including the responsibilities for the care of animals.

The EOP described in this unit emphasizes three related concepts:

- ▶ Plans work best within organizational structures that are responsive to non-emergency duties. If a job is done well every day, it is done best by that organization in an emergency.
- ▶ Crises should be met at the lowest and most immediate level of government. Plans call for local response supplemented, if necessary, by the next higher governmental level.
- ▶ Voluntary response and involvement of the private sector (business, industry, and the public) should be sought and emphasized. The emergency management partnership is important to all phases and types of disasters.

The following provides examples for each of these concepts:

- An EOP should be developed with animal control agencies, veterinary services, humane shelters and other permanent businesses, associations and professionals in the community who deal with issues that affect animals and their owners daily.
- A community plan that has the same format as other plans from higher levels of government ensures effective collaboration in the event of a large-scale disaster.

The planning process is just as important as the final plan itself. During the planning process, people and organizations learn to work as a team. An emergency plan built on these principles will result in a model of community preparedness built on the basic emergency functions shown in the following table.

Basic Emergency Functions — Annexes to accompany your basic plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Direction and Control ■ Warning ■ Communications ■ Public Information ■ Evacuation ■ Shelter ■ Mass Care ■ Health and Medical Services ■ Law Enforcement ■ Fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Search and Rescue ■ Radiological Defense ■ Engineering Services ■ Agricultural Services ■ Damage Assessment and Analysis ■ Transportation ■ Resources Management ■ Care of Animals ■ Recovery

Getting started with preliminary plans

The following sections contain information on how to develop plans. The process applies to emergency management officials and animal owners. Some community EOPs may not address animal-related issues in disasters. It is essential that someone take initiative in the planning process.

To begin planning, determine if your local government has an EOP. If you do not have a plan, make a commitment to design an EOP and set a deadline for completion. If you have a plan, use the ideas below to evaluate and improve your current plan.

The purpose of a plan is to provide a systematic way of responding to an emergency situation. Begin by defining:

- ▲ Who has command and authority?
- ▲ The availability and use of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- ▲ Types of communication and under what circumstance they will be operational.
- ▲ Potential hazards specific to your area.
- ▲ The emergency organizations and functions.
- ▲ Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for response.

The Emergency Operations Plan

The EOP is the formal goal of planning. It should cover all aspects of emergency management and all types of emergencies. It should strive to achieve several characteristics: flexibility, multi-use, detail, consistency, and comprehensiveness. Remember, the plan should:

- ▲ Feature dual use of resources.
- ▲ Consist of sections for individual operational responders, thus allowing sufficient detail to carry out responsibilities.
- ▲ Consist of components that follow the same format, thus providing consistency between parts of the plan and among plans from neighboring communities.
- ▲ Involve all levels of government and the private sector.

- Components of a plan There are three basic components to the EOP. Your plan should:
1. Serve as an overview of your jurisdiction's approach to emergency management including broad policies, plans and procedures.
 2. Contain functional annexes that address specific activities critical to emergency response and recovery.
 3. Contain hazard-specific appendices that support each functional annex (as necessary) and contain technical information, details, and methods for use in emergency operations. It must address the scope of interventions and contain an appendix where the details of operations are listed.

Establishing effective communications Establishing contact with the private sector will help to secure access to communications and the incident site, and other resources should they be needed in a disaster. Private companies may also supply trained operators for resources and designate the amount of compensation required.

When you have identified private-sector groups to work within an emergency, designate one individual that will serve as your primary contact. A written commitment from each organization should be signed by your primary contact – the individual who owns or is responsible for the resource. You should also have alternative contacts, to be specified in the agreement.

This written commitment is called a *memorandum of understanding* (MOU) and should be kept on file in the office of the emergency manager. The following table lists some resources that may be available to help you deal with animal care through memorandums of understanding.

Local resources — possible headings under which you could catalog your local resources to deal with animal issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Animal care and control ▶ Veterinarians ▶ Humane organizations ▶ Wildlife rehabilitators ▶ County Extension Educators ▶ American Red Cross ▶ Salvation Army ▶ Agriculture departments ▶ Health departments ▶ Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/Fish and Game ▶ Animal control advisory groups ▶ Wildlife agencies ▶ Neighborhood emergency groups ▶ Livestock producer organizations ▶ Specialty (oil spills) ▶ Breeders ▶ Race tracks ▶ Aquariums ▶ Game wardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 4H groups ▶ Future Farmers of America (FFA)/youth groups ▶ Renderers ▶ U.S. Pony Clubs ▶ Search & rescue teams ▶ Horse assistance and evacuation teams ▶ Research facilities ▶ Pet suppliers ▶ Professional animal trainers ▶ Helping dogs/training facilities ▶ Schools/educational institutions ▶ Theme parks ▶ Owners ▶ Zoo personnel ▶ Hotel/motel associations ▶ National Guard ▶ Environmental groups ▶ Army Veterinary Corps ▶ Livestock haulers

Completing the plan

Completing the plan requires in a series of steps. The basic plan is usually written first. Identify the annexes necessary to provide the plan details. As annexes are written, necessary appendices will be discovered and developed. The care of animals should be integrated into the EOP as an annex and the appropriate animal-care providers should develop standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Characteristics of a good plan

The plan should provide for an organizational structure and offer a definite course of action to meet emergencies or disasters. Here are several characteristics of a good EOP:

- Based on facts or valid assumptions,
- Community resource inventory,
- Organizational structure,
- Simple language, and
- Coordinated.

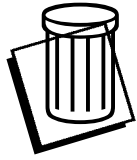
Avoid duplication and conflicts in tasks. Coordinate department plans within a jurisdiction with the overall emergency management plan through annexes.

Testing the plan

The most effective way to test the plan and the capabilities of your emergency management program is to exercise your personnel and procedures. There are four different types of emergency management exercises.

Orientations	Used as a building block to more difficult exercises. Information on this and all types of exercises is provided in FEMA's <i>Exercise Design Course</i> and in the <i>Guide to Emergency Management Exercises</i> (Student Manual 170.2 available from your State emergency management office).
Table-top Exercises	Attempt to approximate reality. The focus in these exercises is on training and familiarization with roles, procedures, responsibilities, and personalities in the jurisdiction's emergency management system.
Functional Exercises	Usually take place inside, such as in a classroom or actual emergency operating center. They may include various forms of message traffic (written, telephone, radio), and attempt to recreate a realistic environment while you respond.

Full-scale Exercises (Simulations)	Combine a functional exercise with a drill in which field personnel of one or more emergency services actually operate. The actual movement of equipment and personnel is important for the preparedness of individual emergency service organizations. To ensure the success of a full-scale exercise you must have first successfully completed several drills.
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LEARNING CHECK – WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT PLANNING AND COLLABORATION?

This activity is designed to assess your understanding of the information presented in this unit.

Directions: Answer the questions – use the Answer Key in Unit 9 to check your answers.

True or False

1. Federal resources and expertise are the most qualified to identify common hazards in your community.
2. Veterinarians are the only group who can legally diagnose and treat conditions in animals.
3. Members of the planning committee should possess experience or knowledge of disasters.
4. Response to a crisis should always rely on the highest level of government.
5. Plans provide a systematic way of responding to an emergency situation.
6. Emergency managers are the most qualified to develop standard operating procedures for the care of animals in disasters.
7. Appendices to an EOP contain details, methods, and technical information that are unique to the specific hazards likely to pose a threat to the community.
8. Local resources that can help in plan development include veterinarians, humane organizations, and pet suppliers.

Multiple Choice

9. The best way to test the emergency operations plan includes which one of the following?
 - a. Exercise the plan using a variety of techniques
 - b. Conduct planning sessions with private sector and volunteer organizations
 - c. Compare the plan with plans from other jurisdictions
 - d. Wait until a disaster to see if the plan is carried out effectively
10. Combining a functional exercise with a drill is a method for which type of emergency management exercise?
 - a. Orientation
 - b. Table-top exercise
 - c. Functional exercise
 - d. Full-scale exercise

Summary

This unit identified the legal responsibilities of local, State, and Federal governments in terms of emergency planning. It also reviewed the role of Federal agencies in a disaster and identified ways that local, State, and Federal resources can be integrated into disaster response and recovery operations. Most importantly, this unit identified the components of an EOP and gave valuable information for developing and testing your EOP.

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